

HACKNEY PEOPLE'S PRESS

Hackney's OTHER Newspaper

NO REFUGE

Hackney is following in the footsteps of the notorious boroughs of Wandsworth and Hillingdon by deterring homeless people from claiming their rights to accommodation, and thereby reducing the numbers of families housed in temporary accommodation in the borough.

In the past month, at least two homeless women, with their children, have left Hackney Housing Aid Centre in a very distressed state after receiving humiliating treatment from the interviewing officers.

Battered women, who cannot return home without threat of violence from the men they live with, are classed as homeless under the Housing (Homeless Persons) Act, and local authorities have a responsibility to provide them with at least temporary accommodation. They are in a vulnerable position, often with young children, and no income with which to seek private accommodation. They leave home in desperation because they can tolerate the violence no longer.

Janet and her two children, who lived on an estate in Hackney, contacted the National Women's Aid Federation hoping to get a place in a refuge for battered women. At the moment there is no refuge in Hackney and after trying unsuccessfully to find her a place in one of the 29 constantly overcrowded London refuges, Women's Aid referred her to Hackney Housing Aid Centre for temporary accommodation. Half an hour later, she phoned NWAF again in tears

Council turns away women and children

from a call box, exhausted and humiliated. She had left the Centre after an interview with an officer. Luckily she was able to go temporarily to a refuge in Westminster. Otherwise, she would have had no option but to go back home, too upset to fight for her rights.



A few weeks ago, a Lewisham woman was murdered by her husband. She too had left home, but had had to return because she was unable to find alternative accommodation.

So what is Hackney doing to fulfil its obligation towards

battered women? A spokeswoman from Hackney Women's Aid said: "The refuge for battered women in Hackney has been closed since last October. It was a short-life house, and we had to close it when the roof on the bathroom collapsed. Since then, the Housing Department has allocated a house for use as a refuge, but we can't open until they do some alterations for fire safety. We've now been waiting for seven months..

"Women are contacting us almost daily asking for refuge, and we just can't help them. All the refuges in London are already overcrowded, and those in nearby boroughs have housed a large proportion of women from Hackney, but of course can't take all of them. It's really a very desperate situation.

"If women are given temporary accommodation by Hackney, then it's in bed and breakfast hotels, where they must live for six months or more before being housed. This is obviously unsuitable for women with small children, who are terrified of being discovered by their husband or the man they have been living with. Only a refuge can offer the security and support that they need. It's vital that a refuge in Hackney is opened very soon."



Above: Tug of war at London Fields Festival - one day in July when the sun shone.

Right: Balloons released at Stoke Newington Festival - one day when it didn't.

Up and away!

Dozens of kids were delighted at the Stoke Newington Festival when the Hackney Housing Action Group released hundreds of balloons.

They were released as a protest against the number of empty properties in the borough. Each balloon represented 20 empty houses and people were asked to guess the total.



PROTEST AFTER RACE DEATH

At 4pm on Thursday 17 July, Akhtar Abtab Baig, a 26 year old Pakistani accountant was fatally stabbed outside the offices of the Halifax Building Society in High Street North, East Ham. Local black youth saw him attacked by a gang of four skinheads. He was brutally stabbed.

When the youth gathered at the scene of the crime to try and find out the identity of the victim, the police threatened them with arrest. It took thirty minutes for an ambulance to arrive, and the police left the body on the street for 2½ hours.

Four white people (two male, two female) were arrested nearby by police.

There was an immediate reaction in the Asian community. By early evening over a hundred people had gathered by the scene and they marched to Forest Gate

Police Station, to demand to know the identity of the murdered man. On arrival there they were told that the murder was not being treated as racist. Moreover the police refused to give out the name of the victim. As the marchers dispersed a man came out of a nearby pub and threatened some of them with a knife. The police took no action against him, and moved the marchers on.

On Friday, local youth met and formed the Newham Youth Movement. They called a demonstration for the following day, Saturday.

The response was very good. More than 1500 people set out from Plashet Park, headed by black youth and the Asian community. They were accompanied by many local trades unionists and anti-racists, including local MPs Nigel

Spearing and Ron Leighton.

During the march, four people were arrested when they attempted to enter a house when racist abuse was shouted from a top window.

RELEASED

Again, the focus shifted to Forest Gate Police Station where the four people were taken. The march refused to move from the station until they were released. It took nearly two hours of negotiation for the four to come out.

The march then moved on to West Ham Police Station, where it was understood the murder enquiry was based. However a police cordon prevented the march reaching its goal, and more arrests were made. Finally the march returned to the scene of the murder on

High Street North, where prayers were said.

Pickets will be mounted at Stratford Court on 4th, 9th, 11th and 14th August when those arrested on the march come to court.

Meanwhile the four skinheads have been remanded on a charge of murder. They are aged between 15 and 17. It is understood that three of them attended an East Ham school which has a history of racist attacks on black pupils and teachers.

There will be a much larger demonstration on Saturday 2nd August, assembling at Plashet Park, Plashet Road, E6, at 2pm. Money is urgently needed for the defence of those arrested on the first march. Contact Newham Youth Movement, 241E High Street North, E6 or Hackney CRE, 247 Mare Street, E8 (986 4121).

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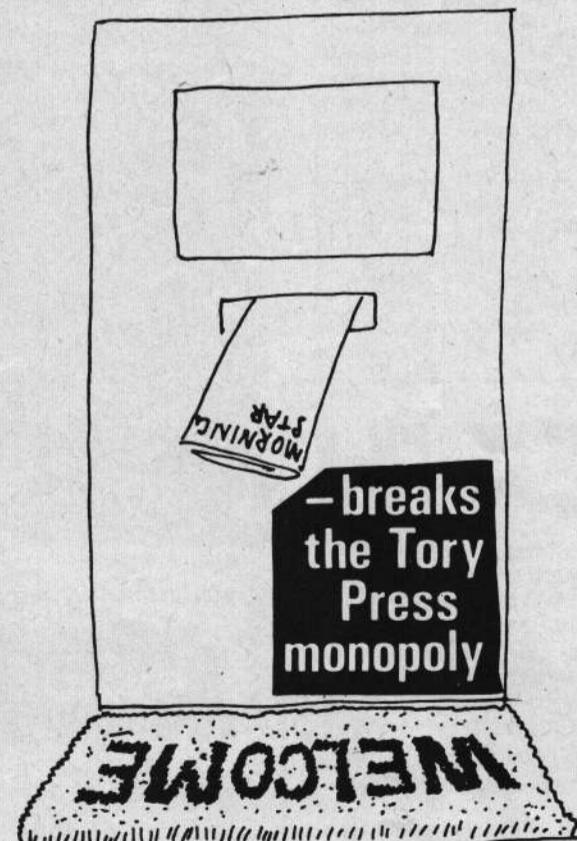
Right split gets Ellis the boot

People don't think about the GLC much. We all know about Parliament - the braying of the animals down on the farm is now a common occurrence on radio or television news. And we know all about the local council - or those of us who read Inside Left every month do. Somewhere in the middle comes the GLC, whose members are sort of mini-MPs. Each of them sits for a constituency exactly equivalent to the Parliamentary divisions. So in Hackney, we have, of course, three stalwart members of the Labour Party. And these positions are in the gift of the same bunch who select the MPs and local councillors.

Now you will remember that I told you how easy it was to become a local councillor. In some parts of London, it is rather difficult to become a GLC member. There are, actually, more suitable people willing to stand than there are places. Now this is not a very healthy state of affairs for the comrades from, for instance, Hackney Central Labour Party, who, you will recall, are not very keen on having the boat rocked. This sort of thing leads to votes and other unhealthy signs of democracy.

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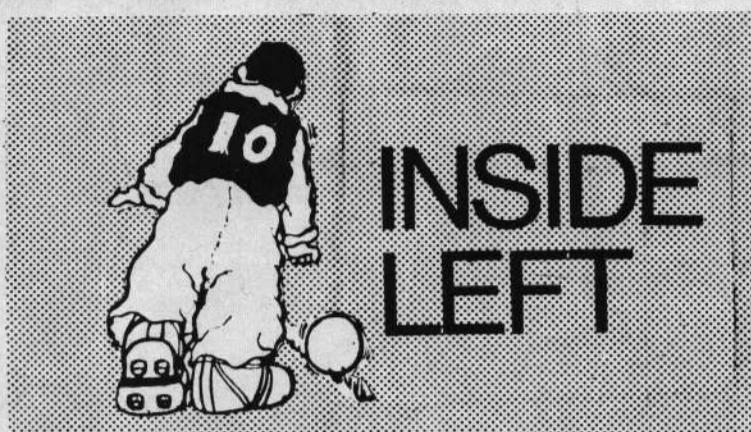


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Not at all the proper way of doing things!

So, imagine the surprise when they came to select the GLC candidate for next May's elections. The job belongs to Ellis Hillman, of whom it can justly be said, Ellis Who? Good old Ellis has had the Hackney Central seat since round about 1892. And there was another candidate. Dynamic left-winger John Carr. Ex-Hackney Council for Racial Equality officer, now employed by Hackney Council itself (no less).

Well, they took a vote. And this is where something went wrong. Because there was a

split in the right, and some of them didn't vote for Hillman. Jim Holland, for instance, newly promoted to a chair of a major committee of the Council, voted for Carr! What a turn-up.

So Ellis is without a job. And he was nearly joined out in the wilderness by Margaret Morgan, who scraped in by one vote only over Gerry Ross, doyen of the Broad Left, in the selection procedure in Hackney South.



In Hackney North the situation is rather different. The current GLC member is Ken Livingstone, very vocal and very left. This means that he is trying to find a seat somewhere else. That may sound a bit stupid, but it isn't. Not in terms of the struggle inside the GLC Labour Group, anyway. This is delicately poised between left and right, and our Ken is trying to find another seat, presently occupied by a right-winger. Then, he will win that, and Hackney North will select some leftie (Labour Party chairperson Tony Millwood is the most likely) and there will be one more piece slotted into the Grand Design. This is to get Ken elected as leader of the group and then, presumably, leader of the GLC, which, they assume, will swing to Labour next May. So Ken Livingstone is trying to get in in Paddington and it will be farewell to Hackney. (There won't be that many tears shed, either...)

The GLC really should get much more attention than it does. The penchant for self-publicity of Tory idiots like Horace Cutler ("Stage the Olympics in Dockland") has meant that its affairs are quite well covered in London-wide papers like the Evening Standard and News. But how often do you read any serious political comment in the Gazette? Not very often, is the answer. So, some of Inside Left's highly trained team of moles has been deputed to dig deep around County Hall. Major political issues will be sniffed out and brought to the surface. It won't just be at Hackney Labour Group meetings that the curtains will be twitching...

Protest and Survive

Today we all face the growing possibility that in our lifetime and that of our children we will be the victims of a nuclear holocaust. The terror of this knowledge is such that many push the possibility into the subconscious - refusing even to think about it - and believing that in any case we are helpless to do anything about it.

There is little doubt that we are witnessing a drive to nuclear war by the West, particularly in Britain. Recent decisions to update Polaris with US Trident missiles and to base 160 US Cruise missiles in Britain in 1982/3 were taken in secrecy by an inner group of senior ministers in a cabinet committee (MISC 7), the existence of which is not publicly admitted. The committee contains only five members - Margaret Thatcher, Lord Carrington, Geoffrey Howe, Francis Pym and William Whitelaw. Their decision was made in secrecy to preempt any attempt at Parliamentary or public debate. This is not simply Tory strategy, however, for no government has been prepared to allow open debate on defence.

NATO has a first strike commitment and the decision to site Cruise missiles in Britain is part of its offensive - to make Britain an "unsinkable launching pad" for American missiles. The "launching pad" will be owned and operated by the USA. This means that if America plans a first strike on the Soviet Union, Britain would have no say and no power to resist such a decision. The resulting retaliation would mean Britain wiped off the world map.

The terms "theatre war" and "limited war" are deliberately used to quieten the doubts and fears in the European and British mind, and to make nuclear war more acceptable, implying that such a war would be contained and small-scale. In fact what such militarist jargon really means is that a nuclear war would be waged in Europe -

Europe therefore becomes the "theatre" and a limited war becomes the obliteration of countries like Britain and cities like Rome or Bonn. To this end, the USA are employing more missiles than ever in Europe.

To "prepare" Britain for nuclear war the government have published "Protect And Survive", a ludicrous account of how a family could survive a nuclear attack by crawling under the stairs with a radio. The horrors of nuclear war are being deliberately played down - the suggestion made that there would be survivors - but can living with radiation sickness, burns or cancers and the memory of the holocaust be called "survival"?

We must never accept that thermo-nuclear war can be tolerated, nor that it is inevitable. We must not expect a war and therefore prepare for one. We have two years in which to prevent Cruise missiles coming to Britain. And it can be done. In Norway in 1978, a mass protest against the neutron bomb, involving over half that country's population was enough to keep that weapon out of Europe.

The Dutch, Belgians and West Germans have already begun mass disarmament and No Cruise Campaigns - the Japanese trades unions have collected more than 25 million signatures towards the worldwide target of one billion. Britain must do the same. Our future depends on it.

Hackney CND has recently been formed to build a mass campaign throughout Hackney. Speakers are available from the group to talk informally to neighbourhood groups, mother and toddler clubs, trade union branches, women's groups, residents' and tenants' associations, church clubs, scouts, schools, etc. ... in fact, anyone who wants to know more.

If you wish to join HCND or wish to know more details, contact Sylvia Ball, Secretary Hackney CND, 137 Graham Rd., E8, tel 254 2694.

CENSORED?

With no "lone Tory" Joe Lobenstein in the Council chamber (rumour had it he had gone to Moscow to the Olympics) there was not much excitement at the July Council meeting. However, Hackney People's Press was mentioned again at Question Time, when Keith Lichman asked why some libraries had been told not to put the fearless organ on display. Steve Scott, chair of the libraries committee, assured him that there was no political censorship in Hackney, and that HPP was freely available in reading rooms. In fact, they were now taking 21 copies every month (thanks, folks!).

In some small libraries, he added, no papers were displayed, and the public had to ask for them. This might be the problem.

Keith Lichman was unrepentant. He had been told by a worker in one library that they were not to display HPP.

There the situation had to rest, apart from a joke from Deputy Leader John Kotz. (We name the names.) "Surely," he asked, "even in the smaller libraries, some space could be found for Hackney People's Press in the fiction section." How they roared! Now, that was a funny one!

A little earlier, Keith Lichman had put up another black spot when he had interrupted the jollity of sending a ceremonial badge saying, "Keep the Olympics in Moscow" to Joe Lobenstein by suggesting that they should also be given to Miles Leggett and Les Layward, Labour councillors who had voted with Lobenstein's motion in the debate the previous month. "Cheap! Typical!" were the comments thrown back at Lichman from the Labour front bench. In fact the muttering hardly stopped for a full 30 seconds.

Morley House Madness



Picture HCH Photo Group

Morley House, Cazenove Road, Upper Clapton, was built in 1936 and consists of 120 flats in a five-story, single block estate. A part of the Hackney Borough Pre-War Estates Improvement Programme, rehabilitation work is scheduled to commence in November.

All the council tenants were moved out between 1978 and autumn 1979, and the estate was left almost completely empty.

In November 1979 the first squatters started to move in, even though vandalism and thieving had reduced the building to a dilapidated eyesore.

LICENCE PLEA

By February 1980 approximately 80 flats were occupied and some residents approached Hackney Community Housing Resource Centre to ask about licensing the house. (A licence to occupy premises does not imply tenancy as such but makes the occupation authorised by the Council.)

They suggested a direct approach to the Council, and three Council Officers were invited to visit the estate and talk to some of the residents. These officers submitted a report to the Housing Management Committee on 31st March this year, and suggested the granting of a license through Hackney Community Housing (HCH). The Committee however, rejected the recommendations and decided to evict the residents - offering the property to HCH as short term housing instead.

HCH LETTER

In response to this decision HCH wrote a letter to the Council recommending that they license the existing residents through HCH. Their reasons for this were:

* Money could be raised through HCH and rents to pay for improvements to the property.

* Licensing as a co-operative would give stability and cohesion to the scheme.

* At the termination of the licence the organisation of getting all the residents to leave would be made easier.

* By charging rents the Council would receive rates of £5,000 per annum.

* They would be preventing deterioration of the property through vandalism and neglect.

* Short-life housing licences are the best way of preventing the wastage of usable property.

At the moment there are 2,500 empty houses in Hackney, while there are 30,000 homeless people in London.

IMPASSE

HCH said they would only accept Morley House as part of their co-operative with the existing residents, and would not accept it if these residents were evicted. And so an impasse was reached.

Meanwhile the residents decided to organise themselves better. They held weekly meetings, formed themselves into an Association, cleared up rubbish, and met a number of councillors to discuss the matter. They also formally presented a deputation to the Housing Management Committee asking once again for a licence. The principal points they made, which apply to all organised squatting of empty council property, were:

1. The residents were homeless people making use of property which would otherwise be left empty.

2. They would undertake to leave the property when the Council actually required it for building.

3. They would prevent the further degeneration of the building through vandalism and neglect.

DELAYED

This deputation was something of a success. The previous decision to evict was overruled and the matter referred to the Policy Group for further discussion. When the matter was voted on, however, the councillors in favour of granting a licence were outnumbered, and the decision to evict was again upheld.

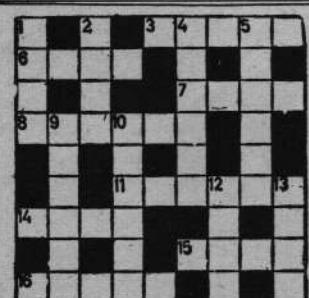
A compromise was reached, however, and the Council agreed not to serve a possession order until such time as they need the premises for rehabilitation work. The Council's condition was that when the order is served the tenants leave without causing a nuisance.

Although the Council applied for a possession order in the High Court on 31st July, it has been suggested that they have no intention of starting any work on the building before next spring. Even then it is doubtful if there will be any money available.

Until then, over 200 single, otherwise homeless, people have somewhere to live.

speedword

by QUANGO



London Transport in crisis again

The decision taken last week at the County Hall to increase bus and underground fares will have an immediate effect on the two thirds of households in Hackney without the use of a car. The fare rises, averaging around 13% will mean that the cheapest bus ticket will be 13p from September the 21st. In recent years, with job opportunities scarce in the borough, more and more people have been using the buses to travel to work in the city. Routes such as the 243 and 253. People using these services will be among the first sections of the community to be hit. But as services deteriorate further, especially through overtime cutbacks, then it will not be long before everyone suffers. This is an important issue, although one which does not attract such popular support as racism or nuclear power. Over the last two years Hackney has lost two routes, the 97 and 256, in an area already lacking train services. It is time that much more support was given to this issue. The only solution that has been provided by the County Hall so far has been to continually raise fares. In the long run this can only help to undermine the idea of a public service responsible to the passengers it carries each day.

The eve of another rise in London Transport fares is a timely moment to look at the background to the present crisis.

The current financial difficulties are a direct result of the fact that London Transport was last year forced by the Tory-controlled GLC to budget for an unrealistic 13 per cent inflation rate. This has led to fares failing to cover the rising costs of transporting the six million people who use it each day.

Added to this has been the prolonged series of reductions in the subsidies that London Transport receives each year - halved over the last three years until now they amount to only around 20 per cent of its revenue.

Although fares have increased faster than most other prices over the last four years, at around 58 per cent, the deficit continues.

The present recession has also added to LT's problems. Bus journeys alone have decreased by 10 million a month, starving the system of badly needed cash. Added to this has been the greatly reduced number of tourists travelling around London due to the capital becoming one of the most expensive places to visit, and the high exchange rate has meant fewer tourists can afford to come anyway.

But the latest crisis is nothing other than another stage in the continuing decline of LT. Fare increases can do nothing to halt the deteriorating service leading to overcrowding on Tubes, filthy trains, cancellations and those oh so familiar and longer bus queues.

Faced with increasing competition from the private motorist the LT Executive chose to regard its customers as more or less a captive market. It did little to attract customers, and invested little money in making improvements to the transport network.

As fewer and fewer passengers used London Transport, those remaining had to cover the same costs - since as economists will tell you most of LT's costs are fixed and do not alter much with the number of people who choose to use its facilities.

Many people now think that the fare increases at the start of the 1970s were badly judged since they greatly added to the exodus of people away from buses and Tubes. Under the Labour controlled GLC, prices were held down through subsidisation, partly

because public transport was regarded as a social service for those people without cars. Little importance was attached to ideas about subsidising public transport in order to make it more attractive against the car.

Since 1977 the GLC under Sir Horace Cutler has discontinued this policy, cut the subsidy and made LT raise its fares to cover costs.

The connection between the GLC and LT has been a crucial one. Operating under the 1969 London Transport Act, it is the GLC who has overall control, including financial, over LT. Changes in political control over the GLC have robbed LT of any clear long-term commitment either to the GLC or its passengers.

Now it is widely rumoured that Sir Horace would dearly love to rid himself of such a political time bomb as LT is likely to become in the near future.

Instead of GLC control a new LT Authority, perhaps in private hands, would be created.

Whether this will provide an answer to the problems now faced by LT is as questionable as the traditional solution of increased labour productivity. It is low productivity, the result of overmanning, which is said to be the main culprit behind the deficits. But even if LT could dismiss 12,000 guards, bus conductors, ticket collectors and porters, still half of the present deficit of £135 million would remain.

In the battle of words between staff and management, it was the former who received a fresh supply of ammunition recently from the publication of Watergate-type leaks, of the PA International report on the workings of the LT Board. It said that the Board lacked, amongst other things, "agreement on its objectives; is preoccupied with day-to-day operations and discusses strategic issues insufficiently."

As recognition of the poor leadership provided by the Board, the GLC has announced the dismissal of the chairman, Mr Ralph Bennett and at the same time gave him a pay rise of £8,000 a year! A truly remarkable move when there is so much talk of savings.

The problems faced by LT are shared by other urban transport systems around the world. When we look at other countries we find that the greatest difference is in the

The next time you wait half an hour for a bus and feel like hurling abuse at the conductor remember that the cuts in bus services affect the public and staff together. Very often it is the bus crews who have to bear the brunt of insults. At the same time the pressure on crews increases. The working conditions for bus crews have seriously deteriorated. Staff are not being replaced, while the management seems bent

on creating an 'artificial shortage' of crews by raising standards to unjustified levels. Every time the fares are increased the assault on staff increase dramatically. So-called "Bad-Buses" also add to the pressure. The Fleetline series of buses are constantly prone to break-down, while also possessing poor handling characteristics in wet weather. They are only operating at around 75% normal service. As a consequence of the various shortages crews

have been asked to work longer hours. But under the new Bus Plan 80' overtime hours will be cut. This is going to seriously affect the weekend services. This will not only lead to longer queues but also to lower earnings for crews who tend to rely on overtime to make up their earnings.

Bus crews are constantly being spied upon, both by inspectors in uniform, and inspectors in plain clothes, called "spots" who travel on the buses to make sure that the conductors collect the correct fares and that no fares are pocketed.

Apart from this there is the "garage Managers Book". Every misdemeanour has to be recorded, whether it is for wearing the uniform incorrectly or for actually sitting down on the bus!

Promises, Promises

The Labour Party has promised that it will bring down fares if it takes over the GLC next May. In May 1973, it made the same promise, pledging that it would take the first steps towards bringing in a "cheap or even free" system. In fact, in 1973, fares were held down for a time, and the number of passenger-miles travelled went up.

But then, of course, policy changed. The Government insisted on cuts and fares went up three times in 18 months. And they've hardly stopped going up since.



amount of subsidisation given. With around 20 per cent of its revenue received in subsidies, LT has the smallest support in the world.

LT was able to do without large subsidies longer than other cities because workers' wages fell in relation to the national average during the fifties and sixties. But crippling staff shortages between 1972-4 put an end to this.

Also other countries recognised the advantage of subsidisation in reduced congestion and welfare benefits, when London Transport was still preoccupied with making ends meet.

In contrast, Paris has followed through an imaginative programme of investment in public transport. Both the bus and Metro services have been expanded and increased the number of passengers carried by over 20 per cent in 10 years. Generous subsidies amounting to over half the running costs have enabled the Metro to employ a flat rate fare throughout Paris. And this has encouraged the increased use of the underground system, which cuts the cost in subsidy, and reduces the city congestion dramatically.

There is no question that LT has been shabbily treated in that it has been subjected to a long series of short-

sighted expedients, including large fare increases without any long-term plans. Inevitably the people to suffer most have been those people who use it. One can only hope that bus and Underground crews refuse to raise fares, as they decided to do in Glasgow in 1977.

Alternatives

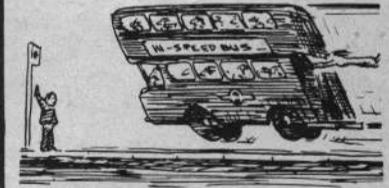
There have been attempts to get LT passengers and workers to unite in a campaign to get a better public transport system for London. The big transport unions organised a "Save Our Services" campaign around the time of the last GLC elections in 1977, basically as a PR job for Labour's candidates in those elections. It didn't work, and Labour lost.

A year or so earlier the Fare Fight campaign thought up the ingenious system of encouraging passengers to take direct action against a massive fare rise, under the slogan, "Travel Now, Pay Later". Passengers were encouraged to pay only a 10p fare on the Tube, and then hand in a slip saying that LT could collect the money from them later, if they so wished. This exploited an apparent legal loophole, and the campaign

ran for over a year, until a ruling from the Lord Chief Justice no less brought the action to a close. But the campaign never succeeded in really uniting passengers and workers together - and it only operated on the Tubes.

The most successful action taken against a fare rise in recent times was in Turin in Italy in 1972. There was a revolt by passengers who refused to pay the new fare and the workers refused to collect them. Eventually the company climbed down, and the rise was cancelled. For a few days, the same situation existed in Glasgow in April 1977, when workers from several, but not all, the city's bus garages refused to collect a fare rise. Without official union support, they were defeated.

The lesson of these is clear. Direct action by passengers and workers together can change policy. But it takes a determined campaign, and mass support.



Acute Problem of Health

In October 1979 the City & East London Area Health Authority was faced with a serious problem. Was it the acute shortage of hospital beds? Was it lack of resources?

No. The Area Health Authority (AHA) was worried about the "serious overspending" in the City & Hackney Health District, and how best to amputate an already disabled local health service.

What they did was to implement "temporary reductions in service" in the district, reductions which included a 15% cut in acute medical provision (i.e. emergency and surgical facilities). Although all hospitals in the district suffered cuts, the future of St. Leonard's, in Kingsland Road, looked particularly bleak.

Apart from the closure of four surgical wards and the shut-down of the Accident & Emergency Department between the hours of 8pm and 8am, there were also plans to cut all surgical facilities in the hospital. If this happened, then emergency cases would have to be transported all the way down to Bart's hospital in the City - or even further.

OPTIONS

These initial cuts were made over 8 months ago, and the AHA's scalpel has been poised over the hospital ever since. Understandably, staff morale has been deteriorating. Nurses have had to cope with overflowing wards while down the corridor other wards are lying empty. For them, further cuts would signal the end of St. Leonard's.

Sensing this mood of desperation both inside and outside the hospital, the AHA appointed a Working Party to assess the future role of St. Leonard's. The group's chairperson, Rev. Michael Bourne, and all but four of the fourteen members of the Working Party,

were co-opted from the City & Hackney management team or its parent body, the AHA.

After 180 hours of deliberation, in which evidence was heard from St. Leonard's staff, GPs, consultants and community groups, the Working Party concluded that there should be some reduction in surgical facilities. The question was, how much? In order for St. Leonard's to function within existing cash limits, they said it would have to provide a "viable mix of acute and non-acute services", but its major role would be as a secondary hospital, dealing with long-term care and rehabilitation.

A&E AXED

The three options put forward in the Report by the Working Party all contained some general medical services, with the possibility of a Day Care Abortion Unit and a Minor Injuries Unit. But despite pleas from community groups and GPs, no provision was made for the existing Accident & Emergency Department.

The Report gave very feeble excuses as to why the Accident & Emergency (A&E) Department should be closed, and general surgery reduced. It was claimed that "full accident and emergency services were adequately provided at St. Bartholomew's and Hackney hospitals", and "the need for general surgery is diminishing because of advances in medical care". In reality, all the neighbouring hospitals' emergency beds are fully stretched, and the only way they can cope is to release patients before they are fully recovered.

To justify the removal of the A&E Unit at St. Leonard's, the Report proposed the setting up of a District Admissions Policy. Its function would be to refer all emergency cases in the district to available beds in any of the local hospitals. In practice, the District Admissions Policy

will only serve to hide the numbers of people turned away from hospital beds, and will make the admissions procedure more complicated - and far more costly.

AHA

However well-intentioned the Working Party was in securing a "viable" future for St. Leonard's, their recommendations spell a reduction in medical services for the borough - something that Hackney can ill afford. And there is no guarantee that the AHA will pay any heed to these proposals. In the light

of a recent report on the AHA's financial position, it is more than likely that they will close down all surgical facilities at St. Leonard's.

This attitude was expressed by several people at a public meeting held recently by the St. Leonard's Working Party. There seemed little point in discussing the 3 options, so people felt, when there was no assurance that the local health service would be improved.

One worker from Bethnal Green Hospital believed that none of the options would save St. Leonard's, as they were not adequate enough. "You are transforming St. Leonard's on a cash basis and not on comm-

unity need", she said. "The National Health Service is being systematically run down: first by the pale blue line of the right-wing Labour government, and now by the dark blue line of the Tories."

BARTS

Lynne Hame, of the Hackney Health Campaign, asked on what evidence the Report assumed that Barts and Hackney hospitals could cope with the extra accident and emergency cases when the unit at St. Leonard's closes. This was answered not by members of the Working Party, but by a Barts worker, who talked of patients there queuing up in the wards waiting for beds to empty. "Today the airing of beds doesn't exist anymore", he said, and he added that if there were another Moorgate disaster barts would not be able to cope with the casualties.

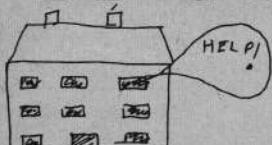
When the possibility of a Day Care Abortion Unit was discussed, Rev. Bourne was quick to point out that this was only a tentative suggestion, and he added that the Abortion Unit in Newham was not being fully used. He ignored the fact that over 60% of women seeking abortion in Hackney are forced to go privately.

DECISION

The whole question of the future of St. Leonard's comes down to how much money is available, and current government policy is to spend as little as possible on the National Health Service - a service already paid for by the people who need and use those facilities.

The AHA will make its decision on St. Leonard's in October; for the community, the choice is either to take the Authority's bitter pill, or to demand more money and a service that answers to their needs.

WORKERS RIPPED OFF



Hackney Councillors were acutely embarrassed last month when garment union officials told them one of their own sponsored factories was exploiting its workers.

These facts emerged at a meeting of the Special Hackney Economic Development Committee (SHED) on July 7th, when a deputation of representatives from the clothing industry and the National Union of Tailors and Garment Workers (NUTGW) called on the Council to lend more support to ailing businesses in the area.

The deputation had compiled a report on the effects of

the present economic recession on the local rag trade - a recession which has thrown over 5,000 Hackney people out of work in the last six months alone. The report also outlined a number of measures which would help to save jobs, local investment and, in the long run, the industry itself. (Whether the government will take any notice is another matter.)

local level

On a local level, the union representatives asked the Council's Economic Development Unit (a body which acts for SHED) to give more financial aid towards the setting up of factories in the district. At the moment the Council has given

financial aid to four factories, through the Hackney/Islington Partnership scheme, and another ten firms are on the waiting list.

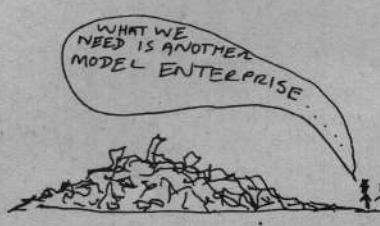
It was one of the four sponsored factories - Goldmans - which the garment union reps. accused of exploiting its workers. They told the meeting that when they sent some of their members to this factory, they were informed that the management would only take on staff who declared themselves self-employed - thus forfeiting their employment rights.

union questions

Having stunned the councilors into acute embarrassment over the performance of their 'model' enterprise, the union

officials asked if in future the NUTGW could be consulted when decisions about helping new businesses were being made, and that a code of conduct outlining employment conditions be drawn up.

On behalf of the SHED members, Cllr. Kotz assured the deputation that consultations with the union would take place in the future. But isn't it a sad irony that a 'Labour' council seemed so unconcerned about the rights of workers?



Hackney Women's Aid has recently opened a telephone advice line for women.

It provides help for those who need to find a refuge, and also gives advice on matters such as housing, divorce, injunctions and custody.

It also offers support for women who would like to talk about their problems and discuss alternatives.

The Advice Service is open Thursdays 1-5pm, on 249 8334.

MOUTHWATERING MECCA - HOT OR JELLIED

If you tried to think of a typical London food-dish, there wouldn't be many to choose from. One, maybe the only, can be found at your local East End pie and eel shop.

Why this wholesome, tasty and cheap meal has never spread any further afield is beyond me.

The shops/cafes originated at the turn of the century, mainly in the poorer working class districts, when it might have been the only opportunity for some folk to have a decent meal at all. Nowadays, it's still good value for money - but the number of eel shops have steadily declined over the years (the latest casualty being 'Fortunes' in Hoxton Street).

Hackney is particularly well-endowed, in this respect, in having the majority within its boundaries: the most famous being Cookes, in Kingsland High Street.

family firm

Cookes has been run by the same family since 1910, when the present shop was built. It still retains the original Edwardian facade, and most of the interior too, and is a

model of hygiene and cleanliness. In fact, when it first opened, the locals had to be literally bribed to enter, as most people thought it looked too 'posh'.

The interior is light and airy, mainly due to the white tiled walls, and the two large window fronts facing the High Street, that hold dozens of live eels wriggling about on ice trays. If you can push by the people who stop and gawp at this slippery spectacle, you'll find that the table-tops are of marble, with wooden benches in between, and a sprinkling of saw-dust on the floor.

The place is now owned and managed by Chris and Fred Cooke, two brothers and great-great grandsons of the old boy who started it all. After touring their kitchen Chris told me, "We never have any trouble with the Health Inspectors. In fact, they send trainees down to see how a clean kitchen should be".

All working areas are stainless steel, the floors are regularly hosed down, and the door is always open, as testament to it all.

Eels are bought weekly from Billingsgate and kept live in huge air-conditioned tanks, using an elaborate water-

cooling and heating system. Four tons of eel are usually kept on the premises, where later they are stored, or jellied.

The meat pies are home-made and baked in an oven, installed by the Gas Board in 1947, when it replaced the original coke-fired one.

However, what makes all of this food unique, is the special parsley sauce, or 'liqueur', that is poured over. There is a certain mystique, and downright secrecy, as to how it is given such a creamy texture. When I probed Chris Cooke on the subject, he became as elusive and slippery as those eels; "Oh no, I can't tell you that", he laughed, "trade secret, you know".

live food

As long as people require value for money, Cooke's and their counterparts should continue to prosper in the competing world of catering. Unfortunately, owing to the recent increase in 'fast foods' and foreign restaurants over the past fifteen years, the East End's tastes have changed.



Photo: Glenn Nunn

COOKE'S is open from 10 - 6, Mon - Wed, Fri & Sat. Closed all day Thursday. Late evening Mon, Fri, Sat: 8.30-11.30.

Price List:

1 Pie and Mash	62p
Jellied Eels	£1.11p
	70p
Stewed Eels	£1.29p
	88p

HACKNEY ANTI-NUCLEAR FESTIVAL

Clissold Park, Sunday 10th August, 2-8pm

Featuring:

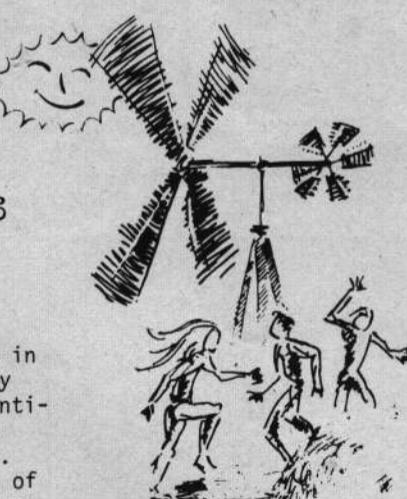
SPARTACUS

CHARGE

MANAGING DIRECTORS

Pete Zero

theatre group: **Survivors**
and a Wind disco.



The anti-nuclear movement in London has come a long way since the first Hackney Anti-Nuclear Group festival at Hoxton Hall in March 1979. At that time HANG was one of the few anti-nuclear groups in London. Now there are groups all over London and this is partly due to the forum created by the first festival. It was there that Dr Wakstein gave one of his first public talks on the transport of nuclear waste through London and following this, HANG decided to concentrate on campaigning against waste transport and have produced a basic guide and a poster on the subject.

This year, we are again hoping to herald a new era in the anti-nuclear movement, the cooperation between the CND and the newer anti-nuclear groups. So for the first time the new Hackney CND will be working alongside the Hackney

anti-nuclear group in the second Hackney anti-nuclear festival.

Whereas the festival last year was indoors and had a mainly specialist audience, we are hoping this year that the year of local grass root campaigning we have been doing will bring us a wider audience. And so we have gone ahead and organised the festival at Clissold Park. There will be a show of hardware alternative technology including a wind-powered disco. Charge, Spartacus and Pete Zero will provide the music. The Survivors will entertain you with live theatre and there will be raffles, food, books and lots more!

CREATING AN IMAGE OF SELF

From out their garrets they came, dressed in starched fluorescent boiler suits and jeans with transparent pockets (symbolically empty), to mingle and chink at the opening of the "Hackney Creates" exhibition. Artists, aesthetes and the purely aesthetic were there in force, guzzling free wine and viewing the creative output of Hackney on show in a distant corner of the Geffrye Museum.

What does Hackney create? Artists, it seems - and lots of them, in all shapes and postures, standing decoratively against existentialist bleak white walls, chatting informally to one another, lurking intently in the shadow of their Muse.

The "Hackney Creates" exhibition consists entirely of photographs of artist and craftspeople, taken mainly, I might say, by non-members of the Hackney Arts Umbrella Project. And they were all there to see themselves: "Dahling, I look dreadful - just like a bandit . . ."

Hackney Umbrella was set up in 1978 by local artists to "encourage and promote the arts and crafts in the Borough" and this exhibition is intended to publicise their existence.

But why couldn't we see more

of their work? Some photographs showed the artists "in the context of their working environment", but I could find nothing interesting in a pin-up of Philip Nichole (Singer/Songwriter) looking laid back with a coke can. Nor in Cliff Davis in his underwear gazing adoringly at Cliff Davis in profile.

To be fair, there are some bright spots. In particular the work of Mike Grey, with his photographs of the Chats Palace Theatre Workshop in various productions. Unlike most of the other exhibits, such as Susie Curslak, captured by Cliff Davis and looking decidedly haunted, the Chats Workshop members are performers by 'art' and it shows in the success of the photographs. Mike Grey's work combines informality with immediacy and action; the photos are full of life and detail, and project a strong image of their subjects. They stood out from the surrounding sterile representations of self-conscious Art.

His one picture of an 'artist' at work, Alan Rossiter, made no attempt to immortalise, to freeze for posterity. It catches Rossiter unawares, up a ladder with a brush in one hand, surprised to be the object of such attention. The photos themselves have a beau-

tiful smudgy, light-and-shadow texture, which also serves to make them stand out against their flat neighbours.

Another (non-Umbrella) exhibitor whose work stood out is Susan Greenberg, who had three photographs on show of workers at Freed's Ballet Shoe works. Who would, I'm sure, be mortified to find themselves in such company. Her pictures are intimate and straight-forward: a woman at her sewing machine, a shy, conspiratorial grin on her face.

The few photographs where the artists/craftspeople did come across as immersed in their work (as opposed to their image) and where you could actually see their work, were successful in their way: Rob Prangell, furniture designer, literally inside one of his upboards; Brian Walker, barge painter, concentrating on an intricate design for a barge door; Penny Crump, totally absorbed by her pot.

Mostly, though, the Hackney Umbrella group seems to have taken the idea of self-advertisement too literally. I would rather hear the Crawfords' flute and lute music, watch Patricia Barhidy dancing, see the paintings, ceramics and sculptures and let them speak for themselves.

MODS

1978 saw the mod revival, squeezing its way through the punk culture. Through the past two years mod has worked its way to the top of the charts, into clothes and into people's attitudes.

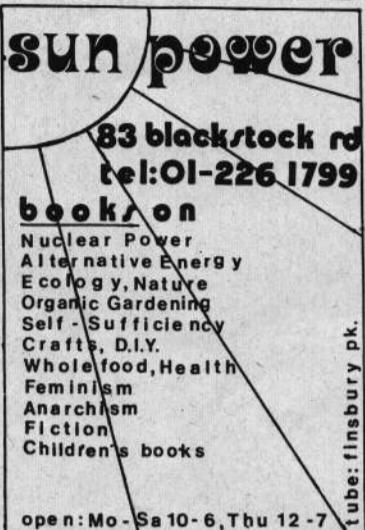
Some of the more famous bands that have left their mark on the mod revival scene are: the Merton Parkas, Secret Affair, the Chords and, one of the earliest and most successful, the Jam.

About that time punk and new wave was beginning to go underground, and mods said that New Wave was dead. It was true that these forms of music were making for other things: especially ska and blue-beat, made popular by bands such as the Specials, Madness, Selector and the Beat.

Mod has also now made

way for these reggae-inspired beats. But they are not just revivals - they've all learnt something from the New Wave of the Seventies.

PS: A band called London PX are looking for gigs. Any offers?



Design a Badge

Hackney Play Association is sponsoring a badge-designing contest over the summer. This is open to all children still attending school and there will be two categories - under and over 12. The theme is "Children Playing".

Children are invited to do a design for a badge on this theme. The size should be in a circle up to 20 cm diameter (but bear in mind that the final badge will be no more than 5 cm wide). The words "Hackney Play Association"

must be included. Background should be white, with the design in not more than two colours. Try not to use yellow as it doesn't show up too well, but any others should do.

Entries to HPA at their new offices, Community Wing, Shoreditch Town Hall, Old Street, EC1 (tel 739 2394) by Friday 30 September. There are three prizes in each category, gift vouchers and record tokens worth £25, £6 and £5.

ADVERTISEMENT



Tel: 254 6677

AUGUST

Weekly programme

Mon 4	LAST FLIGHT OF NOAH'S ARK	2.00
For 6 days		4.40
		7.20
Mon 11	SPIDERMAN-- THE DRAGON'S	2.05, 5.30
For 6 days	CHALLENGE	8.55
	and CACTUS JACK	3.50, 7.15
Mon 18	THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK	2.00
For 3 weeks		5.00
		8.00

Lates and Sunday Matinees

Sat 2	ERASERHEAD and THE CRAZIES	11.15
Sun 3	ALICE DOESN'T LIVE HERE ANY MORE and GIRLFRIENDS	2.15
Fri 8	FRENCH CONNECTION 1 and 2	11.15
Sat 9	DANCE OF THE VAMPIRES and THE PASSENGER	11.15
Sun 10	1900 parts 1 and 2	1.45
Fri 15	CHINATOWN and PLAY MISTY FOR ME	11.15
Sat 16	Z and STATE OF SEIGE	11.15
Sun 17	METROPOLIS and NOSFERATU (1922 version)	3.00
Fri 22	A DAY AT THE RACES and A NIGHT AT THE OPERA	11.15
Sat 23	ANDY WARHOL'S BAD and PEEPING TOM	11.15
Sun 24	A DAY AT THE RACES and A NIGHT AT THE OPERA	2.15
Fri 29	BLOOD FOR DRACULA and FLESH FOR FRANKENSTEIN	11.15

Unfortunately there is no film preview this month. We hope this won't mar your appreciation of the latest cinematic delights to hit the screens of Hackney this month. Back to normal next issue, though.

WHATS ON

A regular guide to events in and around Hackney for the month of August

THEATRES

NEW HALF MOON

213 Mile End Rd, E1 (480 6465)

From Mon 4th: 'Pal Joey'

A mature, satirical comedy from the Rodgers & Hart team. With Denis Lawson, Sian Phillips, Jean Hart.

Mon - Fri 8.00 pm

Sat 5 pm & 8.30 pm

LITTLE ANGEL THEATRE

Dagmar Passage (Off Cross St) N1. 226 1787
Children's Theatre

Until 13th Aug:

'Briar Rose'

Performances (for children over 5 yrs): every day at 3.00pm, except Mon & Tue. Special Matinee performance (for children under 5 yrs): every Sat. morning at 11.00.

From Tue 13th:

'Bottom's Dream'

Fairy scenes taken from 'A Midsummer's Night Dream'. (For children 7 yrs and over.) Performances Daily at 3.00pm except Mon & Tue.

Sats. 16th, 23rd, 30th:

Special play for 3-5 yr olds called 'Monkey Business' Performances: 11.00 am

CINEMAS

KONAK CINEMA

11 Stoke Newington Rd. (254 2415)

Programmes can change due to popularity of films, so check with cinema before going.

From Sun 3rd:

'Can't Stop the Music'

From Sun 10th:

'Aeroplane'

From Sun 17th:

'Caddy Shack'

From Sun 24th:

'Fame'

For times of performances, please ring the box office.

RIO CINEMA (254 6677)

107 Kingsland High St, E8. For details of performances, see advert. on this page.

Unfortunately there is no film preview this month. We hope this won't mar your appreciation of the latest cinematic delights to hit the screens of Hackney this month. Back to normal next issue, though.

HPP is aiming to build up a regular What's On section, listing all events taking place in and around Hackney. These listings are free, so if you have anything that could go in - meetings, plays, benefits, musical events, jumble sales, etc - please send us the details. We need: type of event, date, place, time, entrance fee and other relevant details. Listings for the September issue should be sent to HPP, 85 Dalston Lane, E8, before 20 August.

MUSIC

SUGAWN KITCHEN

Duke of Wellington, Balls Pond Road, Dalston.

Irish folk music nearly every Sat. night with res. band.

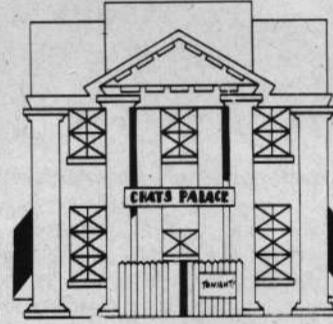
Unfortunately, Sugawn Kitchen will close in August when the O'Neill's, who have been in Balls Pond Rd for 14 years, leave the Duke of Wellington. After the end of the month the music and theatre will go to the Irish Club, Eaton Sq. A loss to Hackney.

CROWN & CASTLE

Dalston Junction, E8 (254 3678)

The Meeting Place folk club has Irish folk music every Fri, Sat & Sun evenings. Resident band Cara. Plus surprise guests.

8.30 - 11.00 pm. Free



CHATS PALACE

42-44 Brooksby's Walk, E9. (986 6714)

Chats will be running a limited number of events during August, and if you attend any of the regular clubs or courses please check whether they are operating.

Fri 1st: Chats Theatre Workshop Benefit.

Sat 2nd: Music Hall.

Regular Events:

Sundays at 12.00 noon:

Lunchtime jazz

Thursdays at 8.00 pm:

Home Grown Music

CHATS PALACE/HOMERTON GROVE ADVENTURE PLAYGROUND

From 28th July for 6 weeks: Summer Playscheme

Weeks 1 - 4 include video, film making.

Sat 16th Aug: Open Air Rock Concert by Hackney Musicians' Collective

Further information from: Chats Palace

FESTIVALS

Sat 2nd August:

Haggerston Community Festival Contact Les Mills: 254 1107.

Sat 16th August:

Holly Street Festival Contact Gordon Theobald: 249 6476

Sat 10th: Hackney Anti-Nuclear Festival

At: Clissold Park, 2pm - 8pm Lots of bands, including: 'Spartacus', 'Charge', 'M.D.s' plus 'Survivors' theatre group and a wind disco. Free.

MEETINGS

HACKNEY FIGHTBACK

Mon 4th: Public Meeting at the Trades & Labour Club, 96 Dalston Lane, E8.

REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST TENDENCY

The Next Step readers' group meets every Thursday at 7.30 at the Trades & Labour Hall, 96 Dalston Lane, E8. Discussions are on racism, Ireland, unemployment and other important issues.

Contact: ELWAR, Box 22, 136 Kingsland High St, E8.

OTHER

CRAFT WORKSHOP 226 6001

The Factory, Mathias Rd, N16 Creche facilities and coffee available. Workshop runs on Thursday mornings 9.30 - 11.30



Sat 23rd: Conference on Anti-Psychiatry.

Organised by PROMPT (Promotion of the Rights of Mental Patients). At: Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq, WC1 10.00am - 10.00pm Fee: 50p Claimants/Others £1 Others For information contact: 693 0011 Mon/Wed/Fri 3-10pm.

GEFFRYE MUSEUM

Kingsland Road, E2.

Exhibition of Photographs of people working in the Arts and Crafts in Hackney. Organised by Hackney Umbrella Open till 14th Sept.

Soggy Summer Fun



It has stayed dry for some of Hackney's Festivals this year! Pictures of London Fields Festival and a street party in Lenthall Road by Ernie Greenwood.

WELCOME HACKNEY TENANT!

Number One of the new Hackney Tenants' paper, produced by the Federation of Hackney Tenants' Associations, is now available from your TA or from the Federation at 360 Old Street, London EC1.

HACKNEY PEOPLE'S PRESS

HACKNEY PEOPLE'S PRESS holds regular meetings on Mondays at 8pm in our office at 85 Dalston Lane, E8. If you would like to find out more about us - or volunteer to help write, produce or sell the next issue - then please come along. Meetings during August will be on 4th, 11th and 18th August. If you can't come, then please ring 249 0311, evenings and weekends only.

HACKNEY PEOPLE'S PRESS is an alternative non-profit making monthly newspaper produced by an open group of people who live or work in Hackney. We publish the paper because we believe that Hackney needs an alternative to the commercial press to serve the real interests of its people. We have no editor and no shareholders and no one is paid by the paper.

HPP is your newspaper: anyone who lives or works in Hackney is welcome to come and help us. All decisions are made collectively.

HPP is sold through various newsagents and shops throughout Hackney. If you think that your newsagent would like to sell it, on sale or return, then please contact us. And if you don't think that you can spare the time to become more fully involved, but you enjoy reading HPP and think more people should read it, then please get in touch if you are willing to sell a few copies to your friends or neighbours or at meetings.

Subscribe!

Take out a subscription to HPP and guarantee regular delivery! Just send a cheque/PO for £2.40 for one year's subscription to Hackney People's Press, 85 Dalston Lane, E8.

Please make cheques payable to HACKNEY PEOPLE'S PRESS.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

Printed and published by Hackney People's Press, 85 Dalston Lane, London E8. Telephone 249 0311 (evenings and weekends only).



The book "Beyond The Fragments" has provoked an immense amount of discussion on the left. In less than a year nearly 10,000 copies have been sold and it has been reprinted twice. Many people have found that the arguments it put forward have expressed their own view that the left needs a new method of organising if any progress towards socialism is going to be made, and that an autonomous socialist-feminist movement must be part of that struggle.

So in February a group of about 40 people from around the country came together to discuss what should be done next. (The group has since swelled to about twice this size.) These were people involved in many different experiences and political traditions - some involved in

parties and left groups, from the women's movement, tenants' groups, radical trade union organisations, anti-nuclear and anti-racist groups, socialist bookshops and centres, alternative newspapers and socialist music and theatre. What they suggested was that there should be an event organised later in the year, open to anyone hoping to develop a new form of socialist politics. Somewhere between a festival and a conference, it would involve music, theatre, workshops, general discussions and activities for children.

It was hoped that this could be over a weekend, but it proved impossible to find a suitable venue in the time available. However, it was possible to organise a one-day event, and this is to be held at Leeds University on

Saturday 30 August. Obviously, this means that the programme cannot be as long as was once hoped, but there are still plenty of things happening.

There will be a short opening plenary, then workshops on the vision of socialism that we are fighting for. This will take in different themes - from housing, the welfare state, socially useful production, the anti-nuclear movement and radical media, plus other subjects.

Common Vision

Further workshops in the afternoon are intended to explore the kind of links which could be possible between socialists in different movements. The organising group has agreed some basic guidelines, suggesting themes such as past experience of unity, socialist centres and left trades councils. Then there will be another plenary, and in the evening, both rock and folk music with, amongst others, Leon Rosselson and Frankie Armstrong. There will be plenty of activities for children - many of them organised by children themselves - and a creche for the under fives.

"No one," the organisers say, "is trying to set up a new party." What they hope will emerge is a loose but connected movement of people who would organise similar

events locally and regionally, which would strengthen the activities of all the different constituent groups; a movement which would involve activists from different socialist traditions, but sharing a common vision. A one-day event can only indicate the possibilities of this movement. It will certainly be suggested at Leeds that there will be a much bigger event organised next spring.

The final shape of what happens on 30 August will be determined by the people who come along, who will be people like you. Registration will be £2 (more if you can afford it) with music and food extra. Camping and creche available. There will be a fares pool system, so don't worry if you have to come from a long way away.

For general enquiries or registration forms, write to Beyond The Fragments, 39 Kelvin Grove, Liverpool 8, tel 051-727 4608. To register direct, send payment of £2 per head (cheques payable to Beyond The Fragments) to Jo Fitzpatrick, 14 Midland Road, Leeds 6. Transport will be available from London. For details look in Time Out the week before or ring 249 0311.

"Beyond The Fragments", by Sheila Rowbotham, Hilary Wainwright and Lynne Segal, is published by Merlin Press at £2.25.

PETTY BUREAU

